

THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

The Christmas Carnival—Decorations of the Churches—Appearance of the Harlots—The Poultry Traffic, &c.

It will be no news to the little folks to tell them that to-day is Christmas. They have known that it was coming for weeks, and have taken good care that they should have known it also, so that the customary supply of toys and presents appropriate to the season would not be forgotten. Hundreds of thousands of happy home-owners have been jubilant this morning by the discovery of mysterious packages, which somehow found their way into the stockings which had been hung up the evening previous by the children, in the full belief that Santa Claus would not forget them. Nor did he; for the fairy godmothers and toy dealers say that trade with them has never been better than it has been during the past week.

Yesterday, of course, the stores were crowded with presents for the little people, and valiantly endeavoring to secure the toy dealers to be reasonable in their prices. The latter, however, whose business does not amount to much during the rest of the year, make up for it by charging exorbitant prices for the poorest toys, when they know their customers cannot help but buy.

The charming warfare of yesterday, which was bright and clear, and just enough to make a smart walk enjoyable, had the effect of filling the streets with tens of thousands of present-bearing pedestrians. Nearly every person out had some evidence about him of the approaching holiday—some a turkey, either a hobbyhorse or cart, a third doll, and so on, through the entire catalogue of Christmas and holiday gifts.

But the child did not monopolize all the presents that were bought yesterday. The jewelry stores did an enormous business, and more than made up for the slackness of last year, when the public compelled people to forego their usual testimonies of friendship and affection. The fancy goods business of this season has been fully equal to that of our most prosperous years, a circumstance which shows that the general business of the country must be good, as the first things in which people economize when they have but little money are in just such luxuries.

Some idea of the vast extent of the traffic in holiday presents and Christmas farewells may be judged from the fact that the American Express Company during the last five days have received and shipped from their depot in Union street nearly fifty car loads of presents. It is supposed that through the agency of this company presents worth a quarter of a million of dollars have been distributed about the country. The other express companies have also done an immense business, and yesterday their wagons might be seen dashing to every part of the city with packages containing presents of every description.

Christmas in this city is particularly observed by our adopted citizens, to whom it is the great holiday of the year. There are but few Irish families in this city to-day, however poor, but will have their roast goose for dinner, and a reverence for Christmas day and its associations of good cheer and home comfort is almost hereditary with an Englishman.

The Germans, too, have the highest regard for the festival, and all the larger beer churches in New York and throughout the city last night were decorated with Christmas green, and not a few of them indulged in the extravagance of a Christmas tree, with its colored lights and other fanciful embellishments.

Although the Puritans discountenance Christmas, their descendants are beginning to appreciate its beautiful associations and suggestions more and more every year. The Roman Catholics and Episcopalians have always paid due honor to the anniversary of the Nativity, and the most significant and impressive of their religious services are performed on that day.

The custom of decorating and adorning the churches with evergreen, pictures and illuminations on Christmas eve, was duly observed in this city last night. Trinity church, as decorated with most exquisite taste. Across the chancel a red scene had been erected, which consisted of three painted cloth arches, surmounted by a huge Latin cross. The column supporting the arches, as well as the arches themselves, are heavily covered with evergreen of white and red color, white pine, larch, hemlock, spruce, box, laurel, ivy and holly, and other kinds of various hues, artistically combined so as to completely hide every trace of the wooden frame. The slender vine of the ivy hangs gracefully from the columns and arches at intervals, and the light red berries of the holly hang in bunches among the dark green leaves, and form a most charming contrast. On a panel above the arches are the words—

Glory be to God on high,
And on earth peace, good will toward men.
The evergreens are fixed a number of candles, which light the chancel with a flood of light, and make the inscription stand out in bold relief. The pillars of the church are also decorated with evergreen, and on the corners of the altar and around the altar are festoons of the same, which have a very neat effect.

St. Paul's chapel, St. Stephen's church, St. Thomas, St. John the Baptist, the Church of the Immaculate, and in fact all the Episcopal churches of this city and Brooklyn were most elaborately decorated. Nor were the Roman Catholic churches behindhand. They were also most properly and tastefully decorated, and were visited by crowds of reverential worshippers during the evening. Some of the Unitarian and Methodist churches were also decorated, though not to the same extent as those of the Episcopal and Roman Catholic persuasions.

Many of the charitable societies will have celebrations to-day, and it is to be hoped that wealthy citizens will see to it that they are abundantly supplied with all that is necessary to gladden the hearts of the poor under their charge.

The courts have adjourned to-day, and but little business will be transacted down during the afternoon.

The city markets yesterday presented a most animated appearance. They were densely thronged during the day with hordes of families doing their marketing for Christmas. Of course poultry, of some kind or other, was the great staple of the day, even the poorest cottagers pressed by the need and the statistics without as much as asking the price of the various tempting commodities of that description which were everywhere displayed—poultry or game of some kind every one must have, and the few persons who bought a joint of meat or a fine fish left the market with a guilty air, as if they were ashamed of themselves, and did not wish any of their friends to see them.

Still, notwithstanding the demand, there was a plentiful supply of fowl, and prices, for Christmas time, were quite reasonable.

During the week there was an enormous demand for goose, mainly from our Irish population, who have a peculiar fondness for that description of fowl. On Christmas Day the price on Wednesday last was as high as fourteen cents per pound for choice geese, and inferior twelve per pound. The supply for the last few days, however, has been so great that yesterday prices fell considerably; geese ranged from eight to twelve cents per pound, with an overstocked market and few buyers. Turkeys were selling for from twelve to fifteen cents per pound, and chickens for from ten to twelve cents. Poulterers explain that Christmas prices are not "what they used to be" the secret of which is, doubtless, that a larger extent of country now supplies New York with the most superior fowls.

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